

A review of the Soviet press has not disclosed any references of anti-communist underground groups in the USSR, as mentioned in the Manchester Guardian of 18 March. It has, however, revealed numerous items concerning the criminal activities of student groups. These groups apparently have some form of an organization, but appear to be engaged only in larceny, murder and other criminal acts. It is possible that the author of the article in the Manchester Guardian may be confusing these criminal activities of students with an actual anti-Communist underground. As to the other "evidence" of underground activity cited in the article, I have no information except that disclosed in the article itself and in other western publications.

At first glance Marshal Konev's present assignment as commander of the Carpathian Military District appears a demotion. A closer examination, however, reveals that he has probably held this post since September of 1952, when he was first elected to the Ukrainian Central Committee; he has not since been publicly identified as a Deputy Minister of War and Commander in Chief of the Ground Forces.

It seems likely that Konev's assignment as commander of the Carpathian Military District may have been for strategic reasons. The central location and proximity of the Carpathian Military District to the satellites suggests that it is probably the most important of the Southwestern Military Districts. Along the same line it has been speculated by the western press that Konev might, in addition to his duties as Military District commander, have the additional responsibility of the over-all area command of the Military forces in the Tauric, Odessa, Kiev, and Carpathian Military Districts. Konev is the senior of the three other commanders in this area and his experience as Commander of the Ukrainian fronts during World War II would make him an excellent choice for such an assignment.

Special note should be made of the recent election of Konev and Army General Chuikov, Commander of Kiev Military District, to the presidium of the Ukrainian's party central committee. Previous to this time only the Kiev Military District commander was elected to this post. The present election of two Military District commanders to the body appears to be a further reflection of the special status given to this republic and also may be a further indication of the enhanced position which has been given to the military since Stalin's death and especially since Beria's arrest. At present the Ukraine is the only republic which has two high ranking military men on its top party organ.